

5th and Broadway

Meeting a homeless man who smiled on the corner of 5th and Broadway left me in shambles.
I'd hoped to drop him
five dollars
and be on my way
But he had kind eyes that asked me to
Kiss his soul
and
Touch the curly hair that
drooped in his eyes and cascaded
Down his carbon-caked cheek bones.
He pulled me close and whispered in my ear

Are you listening closely because you'd better turn up the senses. When was the last time you went to church?

He slipped a kitchen knife in my hand,
blade first, but he didn't mean it.
I pulled the steak knife from my sport jacket
because *I already have one. It's for rehearsal later.*
His eyes widened and he beckoned for my
knife.
He inspected it closely and asked me if we could trade.
No, I said, this one has an
ivory handle just like my father used to make.
He stared at me with his
hazel eyes swirling the iris into soup and backed away slowly.

Elephants are endangered, he said, as he climbed back into his porcelain box on the corner of the street.

He opened the skylight and
gravity pushed the rain onto his wrinkled forehead.